



Common-Sense

Precautions for handling and processing deer

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Chronic wasting disease, or CWD, is a fatal disease that attacks whitetail deer, blacktail deer, mule deer, and elk. Scientists believe it is caused by a protein called a prion. Prions concentrate where there is a lot of nerve tissue, such as the brain, spinal cord, eyes, and in the lymph nodes and spleen. Prions haven't been found in meat (muscle tissue). Because we know where prions are found, Wisconsin's Food Safety Division recommends these common-sense measures to remove them from venison products. **According to the World Health Organization, there is no evidence that chronic wasting disease passes to humans.**

General precautions

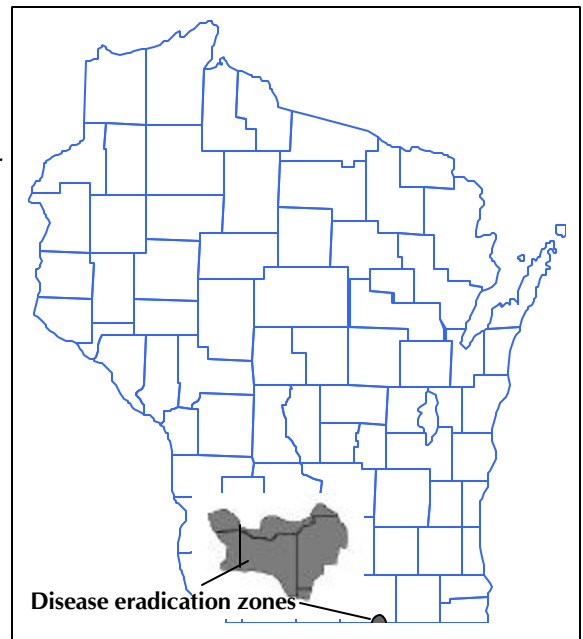
- 4 Do not eat the eyes, brain, spinal cord, spleen, tonsils or lymph nodes of any deer.
- 4 Do not eat any part of a deer that appears sick.
- 4 If your deer is sampled for CWD testing, wait for the test results before eating the meat.

Field dressing

- 4 Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- 4 Minimize contact with the brain, spinal cord, spleen and lymph nodes (lumps of tissue next to organs or in fat and membranes) as you work.
- 4 Do not use household knives or utensils.
- 4 Remove all internal organs.
- 4 Clean knives and equipment of residue and disinfect with a 50/50 solution of household chlorine bleach and water. Wipe down counters and let them dry; soak knives for 1 hour.

Cutting and processing

- 4 Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- 4 Minimize handling brain or spinal tissues. If removing antlers, use a saw designated for that purpose only, and dispose of the blade.
- 4 Do not cut through the spinal column except to remove the head. Use a knife designated only for this purpose.
- 4 Bone out the meat from the deer and remove all fat and connective tissue (the web-like membranes attached to the meat). This will also remove lymph nodes.
- 4 Dispose of hide, brain and spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, bones, and head in a landfill or by other means available in your area.
- 4 Thoroughly clean and sanitize equipment and work areas with bleach water after processing.
- 4 If processing deer from the CWD disease eradication zone, keep meat and trimmings from each deer separate. (See map)



(over)

S Never eat meat from a deer that looks sick.

S Never eat a deer's:

- Brain
- Eyeballs
- Spinal cord
- Spleen
- Lymph nodes

S To be sure you've removed all of the parts listed above:

- Gut the deer
- Remove the head
- Cut meat from the bone with a knife; don't cut through bones
- Remove all fat, membranes and cords from the meat

What parts can I use?

There are some parts of the deer you should never eat, even if the animal looks healthy. These parts are listed at left. They are mostly nervous system tissues, where prions concentrate. Prions, which cause CWD, have not been found in muscle tissue (meat).

You can easily find the brain, eyeballs, and spinal cord. The spleen is an internal organ in the animal's midsection. Lymph nodes are lumps or knobs of tissue. Some are next to internal organs. Others are embedded in fat and membranes attached to muscles.

You don't need to know exactly where the spleen and lymph nodes are, because normal field dressing and trimming fat from meat will remove them. We've shown some main locations of lymph nodes in the diagram below.

